



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 8, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

Family Care in Milwaukee County provides older adults and people with disabilities the opportunity to remain healthy and safe in their home communities. Given this program's great success, I am surprised and concerned that Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is seeking to cap enrollment into Family Care in his 2011-2013 budget.

On behalf of the thousands of Milwaukee County residents who rely on Family Care and their families, I respectfully request that you reject the governor's Family Care Medicaid waiver amendment.

About 2,000 Milwaukee County residents with disabilities, ages 18 to 59, have been waiting years for Family Care services. They had thought their time would come within the next year. It will not if Gov. Walker is allowed to cap Family Care enrollment. In addition, each month another 400 to 500 older adults come to the door asking for help. Under Gov. Walker's plan, they will now be added to a waiting list instead of receiving that help.

While I respect and share Gov. Walker's concern for taxpayer dollars, with the proposed caps in place, people who need assistance will be left with no choice but to enter a nursing home, which will be less effective for them and more expensive for taxpayers. Taxpayers and those in need are better served when Family Care can offer less-expensive and more effective options than nursing homes.

The proposed caps will also place in danger victims of elder abuse. With enrollment caps in place, the choice for them will be life with an abuser or in a filthy home versus a move to a nursing home. Many elders will choose a substandard life in the community over an institutional placement.

The proposed caps will harm the elderly, the disabled and taxpayers. Residents seeking important services from Family Care will get a spot on a wait list instead of the help they need. For these reasons, I urge you to reject any proposal to cap Family Care enrollment.

Sincerely,

Chris Abele
Milwaukee County Executive

c: Sen. Herb Kohl
Sen. Ron Johnson
Cong. Gwen Moore
Milwaukee County State Legislative Delegation

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